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Tajuk : Microsoft Transforming Classroom Learning, One Gadget At A Time.

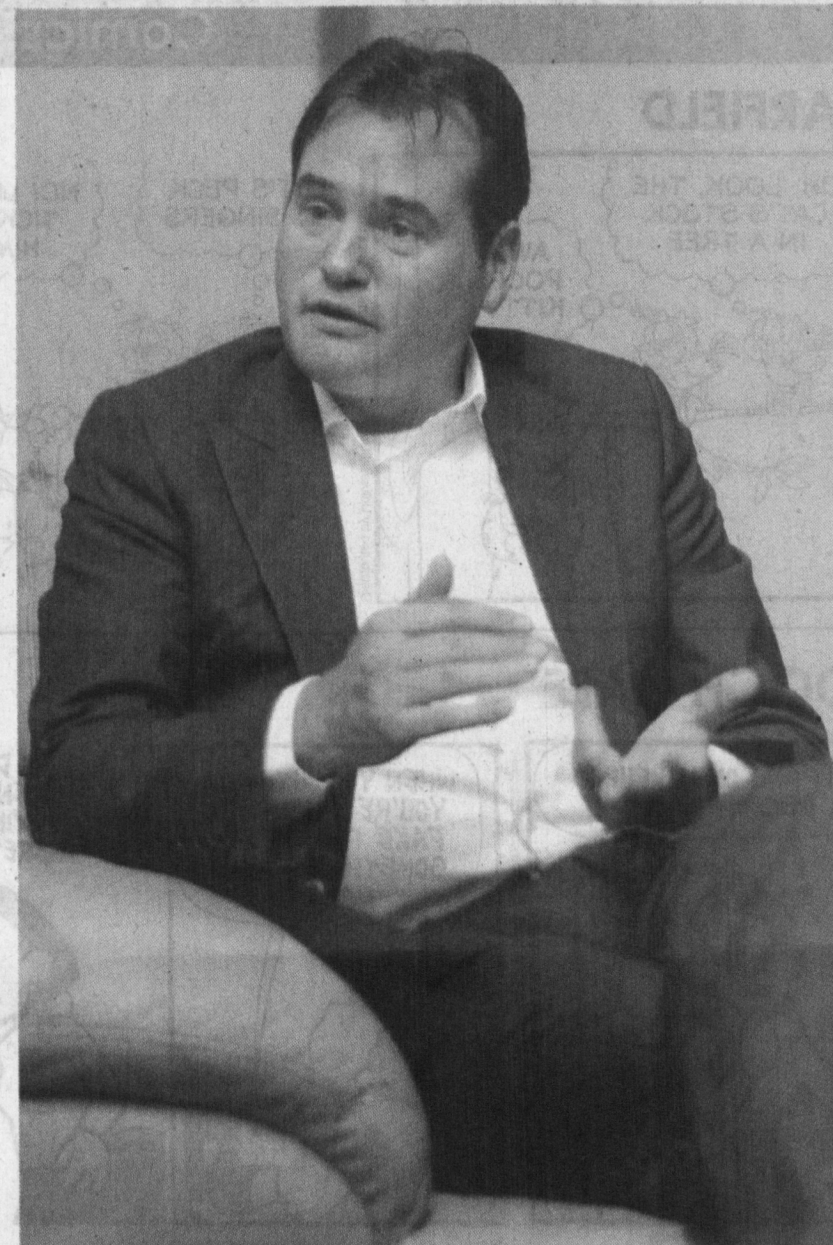
technology

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MICROSOFT has previously cut the price of the Surface tablet computer for education buyers. PHOTO: AFP



PASCAL van den Nieuwendijk, Microsoft Asia's Public & Private Alliances Director, speaks in an interview with New Sarawak Tribune during STEMfest 2013 at Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas) in Kota Samarahan. PHOTO: LESTER GERES

Microsoft transforming classroom learning, one gadget at a time

MICROSOFT'S purchase of Nokia's mobile business will bring the hardware of Nokia and the software of Microsoft closer together. This could also result in interesting Mobile solutions to the education sector through a holistic approach. PHOTO: RELAXNEWS.

BY STEPHANIE JONG

FOR centuries, evolution in technology has seen nations around the world transform drastically. From lifestyle and politics to education and economy, science - a skill only the human brain can master to great lengths - has played such a powerful role in the advancement of mankind and civilisation.

This year, Sarawak has been privileged to host the International Festival of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEMfest) 2013, where focus on those topics were essentially implemented in educating society from a young age.

That being said, *New Sarawak Tribune* recently sat down with Pascal van den Nieuwendijk, Microsoft Asia's Public & Private Alliances Director, to learn more about how science and technology are gradually transforming classroom learning.

Pascal reflected that conferences at STEMfest served as means to show how they could really help students to garner more interest in science, as well as how they could

help teachers deliver science in classrooms in more interactive and fun ways.

"I see advancement where we can enhance and scale out, let's say, the use of science in the classroom through the use of ICT. I'm looking at apps, augmented reality - I see technology already rising these days, breaking boundaries and enhancing competent exchange of language or science learning among students," he said.

"Microsoft has been committed to education for the last 15 to 20 years. We have education teams in every country - people who work with schools and universities, and their (respective) MoE (Ministry of Education) on a day-to-day basis.

"In Malaysia, for example, we have a team of at least four or five people who focus only on thriving the Microsoft Education message and helping schools to get to those steps towards 21st century learning and skills. This is our first commitment - specifically for education - Microsoft offers a whole range of products and services sold at special academic price level," he said, citing the company's Surface Windows 8 tablet price cut for education buyers.

It is believed that every state in Malaysia has adopted the transition or development from conventional teaching and learning methods (mediums like blackboards and text books) to digital learning. Pascal stated that this movement took time, with a number of steps being taken to ensure the transitions were being properly adopted.

"Each student will have a device connected to a system which will monitor the individual performance of each one of them. I see signs in Malaysia showing an ambition, both by the central government as well as the state (Sarawak) government to actually drive this change in classrooms.

"It's a long process - many teachers will be involved and they need to be trained adequately. Parents also need to be made aware that sitting behind the screen actually means learning - I think a lot of parents have a traditional view of what education means, so there is a change required there too," he elaborated.

Though the progression in new education methods can still be accelerated in our country, Pascal sees a positive motivation to make this happen. He trusts that



Malaysia will be a leading country in South East Asia to fully embrace this revolution.

Meanwhile, Microsoft is working on various education projects with other partners in the country, such as publishers, OEM's and NGO's to provide a holistic solu-

tion in schools and universities. Microsoft also recently announced its purchase of Nokia, which could result in interesting Mobile solutions to the education sector through a holistic approach.

Malaysia can definitely look forward to all the changes in the

near future. Through help and support from parents, teachers, as well as the Education Ministry, it is hoped that students will not only learn better, but ultimately harvest sounder interest in science, mathematics, and technology.